

principles beginning to give way before the influence of Mr. Waterston and his respectable short-pledged friends. A woman's opinion may be laughed at; but, sir, I cannot help thinking that these men are either weak-minded or weak-principled. Their judgment or their courage is at fault."

"But, Mary," said Archie, with a smile of something like triumph, "did not personal abstinence reclaim me; and if it was able to reclaim me, is it not sufficient to preserve me in the paths of sobriety?"

"No, no, Archie," replied the noble-minded woman, "mere abstinence from *taking* strong drink did not reclaim you. It never reclaimed any drunkard. It never will. You abstained from *giving* as well as *taking*; from *touching* and *handling* as well as *tasting*. Had we kept drink in the house, Archie, you never would have stood firm. You remember how at first you fell before the very sight of the temptation—how much more so before the touching or the handling of it! Nor will it preserve you. If you have the daring to take the brimming wine-cup into your hand, your brain will become bewildered, your eyes will swim, your resolutions will give way, and you will pour its contents down your throat. The short pledge, perhaps to all men, but assuredly to the drunkard or the reformed man, is a delusion, a veil on the eyes, a flattering unction to the heart, which may do for a little, but will be stripped off or dispelled by the first rude blast of temptation that blows."

"Is it not plain," said Archie, "that if all men become personal abstainers, intemperance will cease to exist?"

"The question may be put as a problem," said Mr. Thompson. "Given, the existence of the evil intemperance; given, the drinking customs the cause of that evil; will a remedy prove adequate to the removal of the evil which allows the customs still to remain? Now, Archie, I will trust the solution of this in the hands of a schoolboy, or any one who has ever deciphered a problem in arithmetic."

"I confess," replied Archie, "that the problem is a very simple one, as you have put it. The remedy would allow the cause to remain untouched, and, therefore, could not remove the evil. But this does not apply to the short pledge. The short pledge removes the cause of the evil."

"Most distinctly it applies to the short pledge," said Mr. Thompson. "The whole drinking customs are embraced in three simple words, '*taking and giving*,' and the short pledge never touches them. By the short pledge, I am permitted to *give*, which supposes that another is allowed to *take*; hence both the giving and the taking, that is, the entire drinking customs, are untouched by it. I would rather be a 'no-pledge-at-all man' than a short pledger, and simply depend on a healthful public opinion for doing the work."

"Well, well," said Archie, "though I may not be able to answer you, my mind is made up. I intend to go to the dinner, and to co-operate with the short pledgers. I hope to bring them up to the long pledge."

"Going to the dinner, and beginning your co-operation with the short pledgers, are two actions that go well hand in hand," said Mary Gray. "But, oh, I tremble to think that both you and I, Archie, may rue in direst grief the hour when you took such a step."

"Flatter not yourself, Archie," said Mr. Thompson, "with the pleasing idea that you will be able to bring the short pledgers up to your principle. I never knew a short pledger brought up to the long pledge by the co-operation of long pledgers; but I have known many a long pledger who, through the influence of the short pledger, has abandoned the long pledge, and some who have fallen away altogether."

While the discussion was thus going on, a knock was heard at the door, and the next minute the disputants were saluted by Mr. Jackson, the secretary to the short pledge society, and the most eloquent advocate of its claims. Mr. Jackson was little in stature; yet would he strut about with

an air of highest consequence, as if the world were all his own; and when at any time he was rallied by the ladies about the neatness of his figure, he would turn round upon his heel quite indignantly, and exclaim—

"Could I in stature reach the pole,  
Or grasp creation in my span,  
I'd still be measured by my soul,  
The soul's the stature of the man."

He knew that Paul, and Pope, and Watts, were little men, and he very naturally thought that as he resembled them in physical, so also did he resemble them in intellectual proportions. The only other remarkable thing about the praiseworthy secretary was the fluency of his tongue. It would seem that for this he had been celebrated all his days; for after he had made his maiden speech at a temperance meeting, his mother could not help exclaiming, "I knew that my Willie would do weel, for he was aye gifted with the gab, e'en frae the time when he was a bit bairnie." At the same time it must be mentioned that while he was becoming popular as a speaker, among the knowing sorts of folks,

"Still the wonder grew,  
How one small head could carry all he knew."

We have mentioned these traits in his character, because according to popular rumour, they afford a clue to the *causa efficiens* of his principles. Mr. Jackson, it was said, liked long speeches, but every thing besides short and neat short days, short courtships, short men, and short pledgers. When the usual greetings were over, Mr. Thompson introduced the subject of which they were speaking by saying, "Your appearance, Mr. Jackson, is exceedingly opportunely, as we are just condemning the short pledge: and since you are its chosen representative, and eloquent champion, we may now hear something in its favour."

"Oh! you are *very extreme men*, you long pledgers, and scarcely deserve to be reasoned with," said the little man with an air of great composure.

"Extreme men!" exclaimed Mr. Thompson, "a very convenient appellation indeed, and generally applied to the world's true reformers. I am afraid we are not worthy of the name. The fishermen of Galilee were 'extreme men'; the world thought them *extreme*, even to madness. The martyrs were 'extreme,' and their extremity was even of endurance of death for their principles. Luther was a 'extreme man.' So was Wilberforce, and a host of others who, though defamed while they lived, will nevertheless be honoured to the latest of time. The world is indebted for all its great reforms to 'extreme men,' and extreme principles. We are as extreme as truth and consistency are, but not more so."

"That is all very fine," said the worthy secretary; "but if we can in any way soften down the prejudices of our opponents, ought we not to do so?—and if we can get me to go half the way, is it not better than that they should not go any part of the way at all?"

"I confess," said Mr. Thompson in reply, "I never liked half-way principles, half-way measures, or half-way men for any thing. It does indeed seem exceedingly plausible to speak in such a strain; but I believe it is consistent with all history and experience, to say, that half-way principles are very feeble things; half-way measures, abortive reforms; and half-way men, persons who not only never go farther than the *half-way* themselves, but prove an obstruction in the path of others, and hinder the efforts of those who are thorough-going good men, and true."

"But my principal objection to the long pledge," replied Mr. Jackson, "is, that by acting it out in life, you frequently deprive others of their liberty; and I cannot see that you have any right to do this. I like to be obliging, courteous, and social to all men. If I choose, I may refuse to drink